

Technical Guides for Exterior Alterations

A Practical Series for the Preservation and Maintenance of Rockville's Historic Resources

16: Accessory Structures

Background

Outbuildings that may be found in Rockville's historic areas include accessory structures and buildings such as summer kitchens, chicken coops, ice houses, privies, smokehouses, granaries, stables, corncribs, carriage houses, garden sheds and garages. Many were part of normal living prior to the 20th century before modern utilities such as water, sewer and electricity were introduced.

Improved means of transportation, sanitation and food storage eventually rendered some domestic outbuildings obsolete, but many examples still survive in Rockville. Often

they serve as garden or storage sheds or have other uses. Accessory buildings are secondary to the primary structure and often were oriented to alleys rather than to the primary road.



These structures are significant and should be preserved because they represent important components of household life and material comfort in previous centuries and add

to the complete interpretation of the setting.

HDC Policy

The Historic District Commission recommends the following guidance for the treatment of historic outbuildings and for the construction and alteration of modern outbuildings:

1. Accessory buildings and structures that are part of the historic context of a site should be re-

tained and preserved whenever possible. Removal or alteration of these structures diminishes the architectural and historic character of the site.

2. Demolition of historic outbuildings is strongly discouraged and must be evaluated by the HDC according to Article 66 (B), Sections 8.09 and 8.10, Zoning and Planning, State Historic Area Zoning Legislation. (See Technical Guide #11.)
3. Moving historic outbuildings is also discouraged. If relocation is necessary to avoid demolition, HDC policy, as outlined in Technical Guide #11, should be followed. A Certificate of Approval is required.
4. New outbuildings must meet the development standards defined in the Zoning Ordinance for accessory buildings, including minimum setbacks, rear yard and lot coverage, and maximum height requirements and may require a building permit.
5. New garages, sheds and other accessory structures should be located in rear yards and in traditional relationship with (typically behind) the primary building. It is not appropriate to locate a garage or outbuilding in front of or alongside a main building unless it is historically accurate for a specific site.
6. Modern existing outbuildings that are not located to the rear of the main structure may be repaired and maintained. Proposed changes, such as enlarging or replacing with another structure, must be approved first by the HDC, as is required for all proposed exterior alterations within a historic district.
7. Historic outbuilding components and materials, such as siding, roofs, windows, doors, and trim should be retained and preserved. If replacement of any materials is necessary because of irreversible deterioration, they should be replaced in-kind and must match the original in design, composition, size, scale, proportion, color, texture, detail and other visual qualities.
8. Outbuildings should remain detached from the main building and from each other.
9. New and old outbuildings should be discernible as a product of their own time although they may serve an appropriate alternate use from their original.
10. The scale, height, size and mass of new outbuildings should be compatible with the proportion of the main house. Typically these buildings were smaller in scale than the main house. Efforts must be made to mitigate the impact of potentially dominant structures such as garages.

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16: Accessory Structures *(continued)*

HDC Policy *(continued)*

11. New garages and outbuildings must use architectural styles, roof forms and slopes, details, materials, textures and colors that are compatible with, but do not necessarily replicate, those of the principal structure.
12. Reconstruction of formerly existing outbuildings is welcomed and encouraged and should be based on accurate historical documentation.
13. Pre-fabricated sheds and similar simple modern structures should be painted to coordinate with the colors on the main building and to be unobtrusive. Sheds should be simple structures with a minimum of decorative features. They should be sited and landscaped to be minimally visible, if visible at all, from the right-of-way. Metal sheds are discouraged.

Staff Approval for Modern Sheds:

Installation of a shed may be eligible for staff approval if it meets the following criteria:

1. The shed must be totally located in the rear yard and meet all development standards of the zone. (Community Planning and Development Services (CPDS) and Inspections Services Department (ISD) approval will be required in addition to approval by HDC staff).
2. The shed must be less than 144 square feet in size and not require footings.
3. It must be easily removable and not a permanent structure.
4. The shed siding material must be wood.
5. A brochure identifying the shed style, manufacturer, size, materials, and window, door and trim details must be provided to staff. The style and roof form should be simple and compatible with the principal structure. Door, window and trim details should be utilitarian, with minimal decorative detailing.
6. Siding and roof color must match those of the principal structure or be otherwise unobtrusive.
7. Decorative features must be kept to a minimum.
8. Evergreen screening may be required to adequately screen the view of the shed from all rights-of-way.

9. Installation of the shed must not result in the removal of any mature trees or shrubs.

For custom built sheds and outbuildings requiring a foundation or footings, HDC review and approval may be required. The HDC staff is happy to assist with design and siting issues.

Certificate of Approval

Applications for Certificate of Approval are available at: www.rockvillemd.gov/historic

A Certificate of Approval application must include the following:

- Existing site plan showing locations and accurate scale of all structures, significant trees, driveways and walkways on the site
- Proposed site plan showing the location and accurate scale of the subject outbuilding proposed for construction or alteration
- Existing and proposed elevation drawings, as applicable
- Photographs
- Schedule of building materials
- Architectural details
- Brochures for pre-fabricated sheds and other structures

Tax Credit Information

Exterior restoration work on historic outbuildings may be eligible for tax credits. A Certificate of Approval from the HDC if required for the work, before and after photographs, and receipts are required. Forms are available on the City web site or at the CPDS information desk at City Hall. Construction of new outbuildings or demolition or alteration of existing outbuildings is not eligible for tax credits.

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Contact Us

For additional information and questions, please contact:

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Additional Information

*Adopted Architectural Design Guidelines for the Exterior
Rehabilitation of Buildings in Rockville's Historic Districts,*
Rockville Historic District Commission, 1977.

Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for
Rehabilitation* (1995), National Park Service (NPS), U.S.
Department of Interior, [www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/
presbhom.htm](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm)